

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

I. Status of the Application

Claims 1-11 and 16 have been previously cancelled. In the present Response, claims 12, 13, 17, 18, 21 and 22 are cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, claims 14 and 15 are amended to incorporate the limitations of cancelled claims 12 and 13, and claims 19 and 20 are amended to incorporate the limitations of cancelled claims 17 and 18. No new matter is introduced..

II. Claim Rejections

Claims 12, 13, 17, 21 and 22 have been rejected by the Examiner under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over the Japanese Patent Publication No. 2000-186718A in view of Kobayashi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,934,157). Claim 18 is apparently rejected on this basis as well. Applicants cancel claims 12, 13, 17, 18, 21 and 22 without prejudice or disclaimer. Therefore, the Examiner's rejection of these claims under 35 USC §103 has been rendered moot.

III. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 14, 15, 19 and 20 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but that such claims would be allowable if re-written in independent form. Applicants amend claims 14 and 15 to incorporate the limitations of cancelled base claim 12 and cancelled intervening claim 13, and amend claims 19 and 20 to incorporate the limitations of cancelled base claim 17 and cancelled intervening claim 18. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claims 14, 15, 19 and 20 are in condition for allowance, and respectfully request that the objection as to claims 14, 15, 19 and 20 be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Therefore, in view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully requested that a Notice of Allowance as to all pending claims be issued in this case.

If there are any other issues remaining which the Examiner believes could be resolved through either a Supplemental Response or an Examiner's Amendment, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 

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